

Week Ending Friday, August 15, 2008

Remarks in Beijing, China

August 9, 2008

Situation in Georgia

I'm deeply concerned about the situation in Georgia. The United States takes this matter very seriously.

The attacks are occurring in regions of Georgia far from the zone of conflict in South Ossetia. They mark a dangerous escalation in the crisis. The violence is endangering regional peace. Civilian lives have been lost, and others are endangered.

This situation can be resolved peacefully. We've been in contact with leaders in both Georgia and Russia at all levels of government. Georgia is a sovereign nation, and its territorial integrity must be respected. We have urged an immediate halt to the violence and a standdown by all troops. We call for an end to the Russian bombings and a return by the parties to the status quo of August the 6th.

The United States is working with our European partners to launch international mediation and with the parties to restart their dialog. Russia needs to support these efforts so that peace can be restored as quickly as possible.

Attack on American Tourists

Laura and I were also saddened by the attack on an American family and their Chinese tour guide today in Beijing. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families. And the United States Government has offered to provide any assistance the family needs.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:20 p.m. at the Westin Beijing Chaoyang hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Todd and Barbara Bachman, who were attacked while touring the Drum Tower in Beijing.

The President's Radio Address

August 9, 2008

Good morning. I'm speaking to you from Beijing, where I've come to support American athletes participating in the Olympic games. This is a moment of pride for our Olympians and the great Nation they represent, and Laura and I are honored to share it with them.

In addition to attending the Olympics, my schedule includes meeting with China's President, dedicating a new U.S. Embassy in Beijing, and worshipping at a local church. During my time here, I'm expressing America's deep concerns about freedom and human rights in China. This trip has reaffirmed my belief that men and women who aspire to speak their conscience and worship their God are no threat to the future of China; they are the people who will make China a great nation in the 21st century.

One of the most striking parts of this trip is seeing how much China has changed. I first visited the country more than three decades ago, when my dad was America's representative in Beijing. Poverty was rampant, and the streets swarmed with bicycles. Today, China is sprinting into the modern era. Beijing is covered in skyscrapers and filled with cars, and the people of China have more connections to the world than ever before.

These changes present the Chinese people, the American people, and the world with tremendous opportunities. So over the past 8 years, America has sought to put our relationship with China on a more solid and principled footing. We've advanced both our nations' interests by expanding free and fair trade and encouraging the rise of a Chinese middle class, which can be an enormous market for American exports. We have also cooperated on other shared challenges, from fighting pandemic disease to opposing North Korea's nuclear weapons programs.